

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: The Western Suburbs Have Failed Me Again

STUDENT: Zachary Kocanda

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Sciences and Humanities

DATE: May 2017

PAGES: 37

In this collection of linked short stories, I explore the lives of several characters in Chicagoland, an area where I was born and raised, and their relationships through several coming-of-age stories. This project adds to the rich tradition of the short story cycle in the Midwest, from Sherwood Anderson's canonical *Winesburg, Ohio*, to more contemporary examples, such as *Murmuration* by Ryan Werner, a collection billed explicitly as a "Midwestern short story cycle, and *The Coast of Chicago* by Stuart Dybek. Furthermore, in writing about Chicago, I proudly add to the literary tradition that has celebrated this city through Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems* to contemporary writing in publications such as *Another Chicago Magazine* and the novels, short story collections, and other books published by the Chicago-based publisher Curbside Splendor. These short stories present Chicagoland as a liminal space between city and suburb and show this setting's effects on the characters in the collection as they too explore the liminality between adolescence and adulthood.